

Dear Chair Prusak and Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas,

My name Colette DeWitt. I live in SE Portland and I'm a volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. As Portland Citywide's local group lead, I urge this committee to support HB 2510. This law would create a secure storage law that requires gun owners to store their firearms securely when not in use.

Every year 15,000 children and teens are shot and killed or wounded, and approximately 3 million are exposed to gun violence.¹ Nationwide, firearm injuries are the leading cause of death for all children and teens aged 0 to 19, and are responsible for thousands of children being treated for open wounds, fractures and brain and spinal injuries.¹ In incidents of gunfire on school grounds, up to 80% of shootings committed by children 18 and younger were committed with guns obtained from the shooter's home, or from friends or relatives.²

One common misconception is that children do not know where parents keep their guns, and their child would never handle a gun without their knowledge. However, studies have shown this is not always the case. A survey for parents and children between 5 and 14 in rural Alabama found that 1 out of five parents who said their kid never handled a gun in their home, were refuted by their children.³

Over the past decade the firearm suicide rate among children and teens increased by 42%.¹ In Oregon, suicide is the second leading cause of death among children and teens. More than 80% of child suicides involve a gun belonging to a family member.⁴

Nationally, youth firearm suicide was on the rise before the pandemic, and now with so many young people isolated at home, away from friends and extended family — with access to firearms amid an unprecedented surge in gun sales — the risk has increased.

We can't afford to wait any longer to pass this life-saving legislation!

Sincerely,
Colette DeWitt

1 Child and Teen Gun Safety <https://everytownresearch.org/issue/child-teen-safety>

2 Secure Gun Storage <https://everytownresearch.org/solution/responsible-gun-storage/>

3 Frances Baxley and Matthew Miller, "Parental Misperceptions About Children and Firearms," *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 160, no. 5 (2006): 542–47, <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpedi.160.5.542>.

4 Johnson RM, Barber C, Azrael D, Clark DE, Hemenway D. Who are the owners of firearms used in adolescent suicides? *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*. 2010;40(6):609-611.